



HISTORIC NEW ENGLAND

Defining the past. Shaping the future.

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HistoricNewEngland.org

March 12, 2014

Ms. Debbie Laurie, CPA Project Manager
City of Gloucester
Community Development Department
3 Pond Road
Gloucester, MA 01930

Dear Ms. Laurie,

On behalf of Historic New England, I respectfully submit this proposal to update the antiquated electrical systems and install new fire protection sensors at Beauport, the Sleeper-McCann House. A grant of \$25,000 from the Community Preservation Act funds as recommended by the Community Preservation Committee would help us preserve, protect, and better share Beauport, Historic New England's most-visited house museum.

Beauport has been well-maintained and cared for over its 107-year life. Starting in 2008, Historic New England has made tremendous efforts to secure the exterior envelope of the house by addressing myriad moisture issues. With funding from the Save America's Treasures grant program, awarded in 2007, and from the Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund through the Massachusetts Historic Commission and CPA funds, Historic New England conserved 249 windows, replaced the roof with red cedar shingles, and repointed and restored all six chimneys.

What remains is an electrical rehabilitation project critical for protecting the historic property from fire and visitors from injury while allowing for increased public use and enjoyment of the facility. The proposed project will include making upgrades to the electrical systems to conform to current electrical standards, installing new fire sensors, and updating an annotated wiring diagram from 1983. Ultimately, the visitor experience will be greatly enhanced as these efforts will eliminate further threats to the buildings and visitors and will help illuminate the museum for increased enjoyment and appreciation.

As always, admission to Beauport is available without charge for residents of the City of Gloucester. We thank the CPC for their past support and we invite you to join us in helping to preserve and share this resource with area residents and visitors alike.

Sincerely,

Carl R. Nold
President and CEO



CITY OF GLOUCESTER COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE PROJECT APPLICATION COVER SHEET

I: Project Information

Project Title: **Electrical Rehabilitation at Beauport, The Sleeper-McCann House**

Project Summary:

Historic New England respectfully requests funding to update the antiquated electrical systems and install new fire protection sensors to better preserve and protect Beauport, the Sleeper-McCann House, one of two National Historic Landmarks in Gloucester. As part of Historic New England's charge to preserve and maintain its historic properties, this project has been identified as one of the most pressing preservation needs at the site.

Estimated start date: **October 1, 2014** Estimated completion date: **March 31, 2015**

CPA Program Area (check all that apply):

- Open Space
- Community Housing
- ☒ **Historic Preservation**
- Recreation

II: Applicant/Developer Information

Contact Person with primary responsibility for project: **Benjamin K. Haavik,**
Property Care Team Leader

Organization (Owner): **Historic New England**
141 Cambridge St, Boston, MA 02114-2702

Mailing Address: **Beauport, Sleeper-McCann House**
75 Eastern Point Boulevard, Gloucester, MA 01930

Daytime phone #: **617.994.6610**

Fax #: **781.891.8823**

E-mail address: **bhaavik@historicnewengland.org**

III: Budget Summary

Total budget for project: **\$45,630**

CPA funding request: **\$25,000**

CPA request as percentage of total budget: **55%**

Applicant's Signature: _____

Printed name and Position: **Carl R. Nold, President & CEO**

Historic New England respectfully requests a \$25,000 grant from the City of Gloucester Community Preservation Act to address one of the most pressing issues at Beauport, the Sleeper-McCann House, for its care and preservation—a \$45,630 project to rehabilitate the antiquated electrical systems and install new fire protection sensors at this National Historic Landmark.

Project Narrative

Beauport, the Sleeper-McCann House

Beauport, Historic New England's most-visited house museum, is a popular travel destination in the City of Gloucester, a nationally important historic property, and a unique educational and cultural resource. Designated as a National Historic Landmark (NHL), Beauport is described in the NHL nomination as "significant in American material culture as an important early collection of American antiques in distinctive arrangements housed within a unique architectural setting that influenced the appreciation, collection, and interpretation of American material culture, as well as the practice of interior design. This collection and arrangement by nationally-noted antiquarian, collector, and interior decorator, Henry Davis Sleeper, was influential in the development of Henry Francis du Pont's Winterthur and other museum programs."



Henry Davis Sleeper (1878-1934) began constructing Beauport in 1907 and expanded it repeatedly over the next twenty-seven years with Gloucester architect Halfdan M. Hanson (1884-1952). A late-Victorian, shingle-style residence, perched on a natural rock ledge overlooking the Atlantic Ocean, Beauport comprises over forty rooms in a combination of French, English, colonial American, and oriental motifs.

In addition to a sense of mystery, wonder, beauty, and spectacular location that appeals to a broad public, part of Beauport's special architectural significance is as a unified work of architecture made of seemingly disparate parts. The complex exterior footprint and massing of Beauport is a product of the intricate interior plan. Interior circulation is sequenced, with rooms accessed from other rooms rather than by linear hallways. From hallway to dining room, from

bedroom to alcove, every room is decorated to express Sleeper's highly personal interpretation of a specific period of American life from the time of Plymouth down through the Revolution and the early Republic. The house is filled with dazzling collections—glass, hooked rugs, tole, redware, silhouettes, folk art, and memorabilia. It even includes whole sections of paneling or timbers taken from demolished colonial houses to continue the desired effect of an arrangement, rather than individual items, to evoke amazement in its visitors.

Beauport is an important link in the development of the museum period-room approach to the interpretation of American decorative arts, previously the domain of collectors and antiquarians, but now appealing to all visitors. Beauport influences American architectural practice and inspires others to preserve and reuse architectural details in functional contemporary settings. By extension, it also has raised public support for preserving historic architectural detail still in place, contributing to the present historic preservation movement that advocates restoration or rehabilitation of entire buildings.

The consummate entertainer, Sleeper and his Eastern Point neighbors were leading members of "Dabsville," a social, artistic, and intellectual colony that flourished in the first third of the twentieth century and both shaped and publicized Beauport. Dabsville itself was named for Sleeper and his summer neighbors, Joanna Stewart Davidge, proprietor of a New York finishing school; Abram Piatt Andrew, Harvard economist; Cecilia Beaux, the acclaimed portrait painter; and Caroline Sinkler, Southern heiress and arts patron. The acknowledged reigning doyenne was Isabella Stewart Gardner. Guests often included John Singer Sargent, Henry James, George Arliss, Henry Lee Higginson, Paul Manship, Childe Hassam, John D. Rockefeller, Jr., Helen Hayes, Ethel Barrymore, Stephen Vincent Benet, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Henry Francis du Pont, Eleanor Roosevelt, and Mrs. William Howard Taft.

Charles and Helena Woolworth McCann purchased the property from Sleeper's estate in 1935, preserving the house and collections intact. Their children donated Beauport to the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities/SPNEA, now Historic New England, in 1942. Beauport has remained remarkably unaltered since Sleeper's death in 1934. Except for modifications to one room made in the McCann era, Sleeper's interior arrangements are virtually intact. Historic New England interprets the house for the public today as it looked at Sleeper's death, excepting the China Trade Room, which preserves the McCann alterations. The house has been run as a highly popular historic house museum with guided tours since 1942.

Today, the museum hosts over 6,100 visitors annually for tours, events, and programs.

Historic New England

Beauport is one of thirty-six historic properties owned and operated by Historic New England. Founded in 1910 as the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities, Historic New England's mission is to serve the public by preserving and presenting New England heritage. The organization is a museum of cultural history that collects and preserves buildings, landscapes and objects dating from the seventeenth century to the present and uses these resources to keep history alive and to help people develop a deeper understanding and enjoyment of the New England way of life and appreciation for its preservation.

Project Description

Based on a preservation assessment by Historic New England's Property Care Team in consultation with an electrician and security company, it has been determined that electrical rehabilitation of Beauport, the Sleeper-McCann House, is a top priority for preservation of the site. The electrical rehabilitation project is critical to protecting the historic property from fire and meeting current code. The project also includes updating thirty smoke detectors that are well past their life span with thirty addressable units that are able to specifically name the location of the start of a fire should they be triggered. This is especially important since Beauport is so large, comprising over forty rooms.

The complicated electrical system at the property is a conglomeration of many generations of wiring including significant areas of knob and tube wiring still in use. The recent electrical assessment revealed a list of issues that could harm the buildings or an unsuspecting person. For example, many junction boxes were identified that were missing covers; there were several open circuits in panel boxes that need switches; and several locations were identified where there were open wires or exposed wiring. Additionally, thirteen hanging fixtures were identified with faulty wiring and seventeen standing lamps with cracked cords, four of which were found to have exposed wiring and were immediately taken off of display.

The proposed project will include making upgrades to the electrical systems to conform to current electrical standards and codes including resolving the issues such as those listed above and updating an annotated wiring diagram from 1983. The thirteen historic hanging light fixtures will be removed by an electrician and then taken to be re-wired along with seventeen standing lamps with cracked cords. After re-wiring, our staff conservators will make necessary repairs to all the lighting fixtures. These repairs include arresting corrosion, stabilizing paint and infilling areas of loss, repairing cracked glass, and general cleaning. After conservation, the lamps will be returned to the museum and the hanging fixtures will be installed by an electrician.

While rehabilitation of the electrical system will make the facility safer from accidental fire, of course, no building is safe from fire; therefore, updating the smoke sensors is essential to protecting property. In 2007, the fire alarm panel failed and needed replacing. It was upgraded by one with better functionality. However, we are unable to fully utilize the fire panel until we replace thirty outdated smoke detectors and three manual pull stations with addressable units. These new addressable units are more advanced and programmable so that not just zones are activated, but specific rooms can be identified through the panel. Therefore, the start of a fire could be quickly identified at a specific location.

Community Preservation Criteria

The following General Evaluation Criteria are met by this proposal:

- Beauport, the Sleeper-McCann House, as a "Historic Resource" is listed on the National Historic Register, and is therefore eligible for CPA funding according to the requirements described in Massachusetts' CPA legislation. It is also considered by the city as being significant, specifically mentioned on page 18 of the Community Preservation Plan (2010, updated 2013) as one of two unique homes that are preserved and are significant visitor destinations.

- This project will help preserve and enhance the essential character of the city, and specifically the neighborhood of Eastern Point, by protecting this resource from potential fire and electrical mishap as well as improving the visitor experience by providing better lighting at the site.
- This project will protect this historic resource that may be threatened by outdated electrical systems that do not meet code. Therefore, by the CPA's definition of "rehabilitation," this project seeks to make extraordinary repairs to this historic resource in order to make it functional for its intended use including improvements to comply with federal, state, or local building codes. Rehabilitation will comply with the United States Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.
- Historic New England's Property Care Team has embarked on other projects of this size and scope in the past and have demonstrated that they are able to implement similar projects within budget and on schedule.
- Due to a challenge grant from an anonymous foundation, new gifts of \$1,000 or more or gifts increased by \$1,000 more than any previous gifts are matched by 80%. Historic New England will be able to leverage this challenge grant to help raise our share of the project expenses.
- Endorsements: Letters of Support from Linn Parisi, Director of Discover Gloucester, Ann Marie Casey, Executive Director of North of Boston CVB, and Karen Ristuben, President of Rocky Neck Art Colony.

The following Category Specific Criteria are met by this proposal:

- Rehabilitation of the obsolete and outdated electrical infrastructure systems need to be seismically upgraded to be safe, functional, and meet code in order to avoid potential threat from fire. Modifications to the historic fabric of the property would be minimal.
- This project rehabilitates the electrical and fire protection systems to better achieve the historical functionality of the site.
- The project will benefit the public by providing a safer environment (removing any exposed wiring) as well as creating a better lit facility for events and tours. Visitors will not only be able to view the house and collections better, but also will be able to see better for secure footing through winding staircases and narrow passages. Having better illumination also improves the visitors' experience of the site for evening programs and tours.
- While it is difficult to say any preservation efforts are "permanent," the electrical rehabilitation will have long-term benefits by greatly reducing the threat of electrical fire and have a life span of 20 to 30 years.

Community Needs and Population Served

The electrical rehabilitation will make it possible to continue to serve the volume of visitors in a much safer fashion.

Since 1942, the Beauport, the Sleeper-McCann House has operated as a historic house museum that helps to stimulate the creative economy in the City of Gloucester, Cape Ann, and the North of Boston Region. As one of two National Historic Landmarks in the city, Beauport has become a destination for niche groups and general tourists alike. In 2013, over 6,100 visitors toured the

house during its open months of late May to mid-October, helping to establish the house as a tourism anchor in the community. Since 2005, Beauport's visitation has been increased by 20% and the site has been featured in national and international publications including *World of Interiors*, *Martha Stewart Living*, and *Architectural Digest* and was most recently on the popular television program *Antiques Roadshow* in February 2013.

Open from Tuesday through Saturday, June 1 to October 15, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., Beauport welcomes the general public for tours, programs, and research. City of Gloucester residents are admitted to Beauport free of charge. Special programs offered at Beauport include extended *Nooks and Crannies* tours, *Twilight Tours*, *Tea by the Sea* (a tea served on the terrace), and lectures and workshops in partnership with local organizations.

Long-Term Preservation

Historic New England follows an institutional preservation philosophy that emphasizes the retention of all historic fabric when possible. Diligent maintenance is the first step in preventing the loss of historic fabric, but if work is required, the condition is analyzed and evaluated to determine the proper approach to preserve the resource. When work is performed, all efforts are made to retain the historic fabric and, if repairs or replacement are necessary, Historic New England strives to match materials in-kind and to fully document the work that has been performed as prescribed by the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Preservation of Historic Buildings. This particular project is a rehabilitation project in order to meet current electrical standards and codes and will also follow the guidelines as set forth by the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Preservation of Historic Buildings. (See also Historic New England's Preservation Philosophy document in the attachments.)

Community Support and Participation

Beauport is a member of the Association of Eastern Point Residents, Cape Ann Chamber of Commerce, Discover Gloucester DMO, North of Boston Convention and Visitors Bureau and New England Museum Association. Partners include the Rocky Neck Art Colony, seARTS, Ryan and Wood Distillery, Gloucester Stage Company, The North Shore Folklore Theater Company and several other tourism organizations and businesses throughout the city. Beauport is also one of thirty-six historic house museums owned and operated by Historic New England which has a membership base of nearly 8,000 households. Beauport is well-known and well-regarded throughout the region and has strong community support. This project will allow Historic New England to continue to serve over 6,100 visitors each year and help simulate the Gloucester tourism and creative economy.

The following is a summary of highlights:

- Beauport is one of two National Historic Landmarks in Gloucester.
- Beauport is open free to Gloucester residents.
- Beauport is ranked #1 or #2 (it fluctuates) out of twenty-four attractions in Gloucester.
- Beauport participates in Gloucester's annual Schooner Festival with the fireworks program and Parade of Sail viewing.
- Beauport is prominently featured on several web sites promoting Cape Ann, the North Shore, Essex County, and Massachusetts.

- Beauport is on the cover of the *Great Houses of New England*, a Rizzoli publication featuring twenty-five extraordinary houses from all six New England states.
- The grounds at Beauport are available for wedding ceremonies. The house partners with and promotes area businesses that offer wedding services, on its website and literature.

How will Success be Measured

Addressing all of the electrical issues noted in the assessment will result in a successful project. Projects are monitored regularly by our Preservation Team so that they conform to budget and schedule. The project will also be measured according to current electrical standards and codes.

At Historic New England we strive to meet the highest preservation standards and best practices in the field, often documenting and sharing our work at no charge through online White Papers available to all, and also sharing our experiences at professional conferences with the goal of being a national leader in historic preservation.

Ongoing Maintenance

It is Historic New England's philosophy and practice that long-term preservation is a result of good maintenance. The prevention of damage and the assurance of long-term maintenance are undeniably better for the preservation of the site than any repair or replacement of historic material. Historic New England budgets approximately \$25,000 to \$30,000 annually for basic maintenance practices at Beauport, the Sleeper-McCann House, with additional project-specific funding applied through the budget. Recent examples include the \$1.2 million building and landscape restoration project, with support from the CPC, which won both state and national preservation awards.

The electrical system should not require general maintenance but will require periodic improvements every 20 to 30 years to keep in step with changes in electrical code and advances in wiring technology. Maintenance of the fire sensors will be serviced regularly as part of our standard annual security contract.

Project Budget and Budget Narrative (See Attachment)

Project Timeline (See Attachment)

Feasibility

Due to the nature of the work only an electrical permit will be required. Electrical rehabilitation is classified as maintenance work and does not require approvals from the Massachusetts Historical Commission.

Historic New England maintains up-to-date condition assessments of its properties as an invaluable component of maintenance and project planning for all the historic properties and landscapes the organization owns. The properties are assessed by teams—generally made up of a preservation project manager, a preservation carpenter, a preservation manager, and the site manager. This project fits within the scale and abilities of staff and contractors as it is similar to other projects we have successfully completed.

USGS topographical Map (See Attachment)

Visual Materials (See Condition Assessments in the Attachments)

Applicant Qualifications

This project will be managed by professional preservation staff members. The property care team is led by Benjamin Haavik who has sixteen years of experience in preservation and has been managing the preservation and maintenance of the Historic New England properties for the last ten years. The project manager will be Jodi Black who has been working for Historic New England since 2008 and is intimately familiar with Beauport, the Sleeper-McCann House, from having overseen the \$1.1 million house and landscape preservation and restoration project.

The conservation work is being undertaken by Objects Conservator Michaela Neuro who has extensive experience with all types of decorative art objects including metals, ceramics and furniture. Ms. Neuro was the lead conservator on our rewiring project at the Lyman Estate in Waltham, Massachusetts, in 2011 and oversaw the treatment and rewiring of three chandeliers and five pairs of historic sconces for that project. She has been with Historic New England for over 12 years and has worked extensively on the collections at Beauport.

The security company, Essex Alarm & Security, has been working with the alarm systems of Beauport since the early 1980s.

James A. Soffron Jr, of Soffron Electrical, has nearly twenty-five years of experience working in the electrical field. Focusing on residences, Soffron Electrical has performed services from new construction to sensitive re-wiring of 17th century structures. Starting his own company in 1998, Mr. Soffron has developed an outstanding reputation for being dependable and professional in the North Shore, North of Boston community. Soffron Electrical has completed electrical services at Historic New England's Coffin House (Newbury) and the Spencer-Peirce-Little Farm (Newbury).

Criteria for Contractor Selection: Historic New England hires only qualified firms that have experience with museum properties. Historic New England requires three competitive bids before determining a contractor for the work. Currently, one bid has been received for estimating purposes, which became the basis for this grant request. Two more bids will be obtained before the contractor is selected.

The criteria for selection are generally based on the following:

- Depth of experience with similar projects and familiarity with buildings of similar architectural significance and construction—in particular, projects subject to State Historic Preservation Officer review and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Historic Preservation (within the last three years);
- Documented experience with electrical work in historical buildings being sensitive to the historic fabric;
- Demonstrated understanding of tasks to be performed and products to be utilized;
- Training and educational background appropriate to the project described; and

- Quality of previous work on public and private projects.
- Price.

If objects, buildings, and landscapes from the past are to convey their full meanings to people in the present and the future, it is essential that their authenticity be protected and cherished. The preservation efforts at Beauport will ensure the survival and sharing with the public of this remarkable architectural achievement and witness to the beginnings of American interior design.

CITY OF GLOUCESTER

COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

BUDGET FORM

Project Name: Electrical Rehabilitation at Beauport, The Sleeper-McCann House

Applicant: Historic New England

SOURCES OF FUNDING		
Source	Amount	
Community Preservation Act Fund	\$ 25,000	
Historic New England Contribution	\$ 20,630	
Total Project Funding	\$ 45,630	
PROJECT EXPENSES*		
Expense	Amount	Please indicate which expenses will be funded by CPA Funds:
Electrician – upgrades, removal and installation of fixtures	\$ 17,500	CPA
Rewiring 17 lamps	\$ 1,700	CPA
Replace Fire Sensors	\$ 5,800	CPA
Conservation of light fixtures	\$ 13,130	Historic New England
Project Management	\$ 7,500	Historic New England
Total Project Expenses	\$ 45,630	

Please feel free to photocopy or re-create this form if more room is needed.

Project Name: Electrical Rehabilitation at Beauport, The Sleeper-McCann House

Applicant: Historic New England

*Budget Narrative	
Electrician – upgrades, removal and installation of fixtures	The electrician who performed the assessment provided an estimate for budgeting purposes (attached). Competitive bids will be sought upon confirmation of the project proceeding.
Rewiring 17 lamps	Rewiring lamps cost is an average based on past experiences with this process. Past projects of this type shows that some lamps will be less than \$100 and some will be more.
Replace Fire Sensors	Based on quote from security company.
Conservation of light fixtures	The basis for this calculation (hours times a rate of \$65 per hour) is included as part of the conservation reports attached.
Project Management	Historic New England's professional preservation staff will manage the entire project. This share of the project is 30% of the CPA project.

CITY OF GLOUCESTER

COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

PROJECT SCHEDULE

Please provide a project timeline below, noting all project milestones. Please note that because the City Council must approve all appropriations, CPA funds may not be available until up to two months following Committee approval.

	Activity	Estimated Date
Project Start Date:	Contractor selection	October 2014
Project Milestone:	Electrical upgrades and removal of fixtures	November 2014
50% Completion Stage:	Rewiring of 17 lamps	December 2014
Project Milestone:	Completion of light fixture conservation	February 2014
Project Completion Date:	Final installation of lighting fixtures by electrician and installation of addressable smoke detectors by security company	March 2014

Please note: If the project is approved, the recipient must provide progress reports to the Committee on a quarterly basis (the end of September, December, March and June). The recipient shall also provide an interim report at the 50% Completion Stage, along with budget documentation.

Please feel free to photocopy or re-create this form if more room is needed.